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Preliminary Report

U-2 RECONNAISSANCE MISSION C455C
flown 24 August 1965

DST-PR/BYE/65-13
13 September 1965

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Directorate of Science and Technology

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MISSION HIGHLIGHTS

Mission C455C, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] was over North Vietnam and south and southeast China for approximately two hours. It provided photographic coverage of 58 COMOR targets, a new Chinese Communist probable SAM site and a reacting MiG-21 aircraft in flight. Chinese Communist and North Vietnamese air warning facilities tracked the U-2 continuously, except for two relatively unimportant sectors of the flight, over a period of almost six hours. Two MiG-21 aircraft failed in intercept attempts due to improper vectoring and/or evasive action by the pilot. It has not been determined whether a "burst" observed by the pilot was from a guided air-to-air missile (AAM), unguided rocket, or aircraft cannon. However, no hostile AAM threats were reflected at this time by the U-2's ECM systems, nor were there any indications of surface-to-air (SAM) activity. System 13 reacted twice during the mission, and was probably triggered, in the Ning Ming area, by a FIRE CAN radar and in the Swatow area by a heavy concentration of S-band radars.

See figure 1 (opposite) for the mission route and table 1 for COMOR targets covered.

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Preliminary Report

**U-2 RECONNAISSANCE MISSION C455C
flown 24 August 1965****BACKGROUND**

Mission C455C was flown over North Vietnam, and south and southeast China on 24 August 1965 to obtain high resolution photographic coverage of COMOR targets. COMOR requirements for south China are for weekly photography of one-fourth of the priority targets and monthly coverage of all targets.

Launched from [REDACTED] U-2 was over denied territory for approximately two hours and returned to base at 0645Z. The weather encountered by the pilot was better than the predicted Category III (broken clouds). Several deviations from the planned route were made by the pilot to evade attempted intercepts by Chinese Communist MiG-21's.

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ANALYTICAL FINDINGS

AIR DEFENSE REACTIONS

Radar Tracking -- Chinese Communist and North Vietnamese air warning facilities tracked the mission aircraft almost continuously for about six hours, except for two relatively unimportant sectors on the outbound leg (the first, a 21-minute period over [REDACTED] and the second, a 27-minute period in the middle of the South China Sea). The U-2 was tracked for a total distance of 1,950 nautical miles at a computed ground speed of 376 knots. Initially detected at 0029Z, 21 minutes after takeoff, the U-2 was identified at 0052Z as a hostile large-type aircraft at 65,600 feet; it was lost at 0630Z, 15 minutes before landing, at an altitude of less than 24,000 feet. The pilot's reported flight path

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was in general agreement with Communist radar tracking. A number of deviations, ranging from 25 to about 60 nautical miles, took place in the flight sector between the North Vietnamese border and the Canton area, attributable to the pilot's taking continuous evasive action for about an hour and another 30 minutes to reorient himself.

Communist facilities reported altitudes ranging from 65,600 to [REDACTED] feet for the mission, while the pilot reported altitudes between 68,500 and [REDACTED] feet. A rough comparison of reported altitudes indicates that the Chinese Communist altitude reporting was most accurate in the sector between the North Vietnamese border and the Canton area.

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Fighter Reactions -- There were seven fighter reactions to the mission, comprising at least eight aircraft. At least five fighters were from the Ning Ming/Nan-ning area, and their characteristics indicated that at least three of these were MiG-21s. The pilot reported that two MiG-21s were above him and made passes at him--one from the left, and one from the right--and that the one on his left fired a burst which exploded 1,000 to 1,500 feet in front of the U-2. Although the pilot evaluated the burst as an air-to-air missile (AAM), there is insufficient evidence to indicate whether it was from an AAM, an unguided rocket, or cannon fire. Whether due to the pilot's evasive action or incorrect vectoring of the fighters, neither approach was effective. No other fighter reactions posed threats to the mission at its flight altitude.

Surface-to-Air Missile Reactions -- There was no evidence of surface-to-air missile (SAM) threats to the mission in North Vietnam or China. A new probable SA-2-type site discovered adjacent to Ning Ming Airfield does not appear to have reached operational status, judging from the photography; and no SAM-associated signals were intercepted in the vicinity of the site.

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Preliminary interpretation of the photography indicates that the mission covered the following Communist Chinese and North Vietnamese targets: 1 missile site; 19 airfields; 127 military installations; 15 naval facilities; 10 electronics targets; and 10 industrial complexes. A total of 58 COMOR targets were covered (see table 2). Bonus targets were the new probable SAM site at Ning Ming Airfield and a MiG-21 aircraft in flight reacting to the mission. See Figures 2 and 3 for examples of the quality of photography of the mission.

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REACTING MIG-21 IN NING-MING / NAN-NING AREA



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Table 2

Radars Deployed in China and North Vietnam
and Intercepted by Mission C455C

Early Warning

MOON CONE

SCR-270

KNIFE REST B

CROSS SLOT

Ground Control Intercept

TOKEN

BIG MESH

Height Finder

ROCK CAKE

AAA Fire Control

FIRE CAN

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SOURCES

This preliminary technical evaluation of a U-2 Reconnaissance Mission flown over North Vietnam and Communist China on 24 August 1965 was developed for the 303 Committee by the following elements of the Directorate of Science and Technology:

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